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SENSITIVE

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (S E N S I T I V E C A P T I O N A D D E D)

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SUBJECT: SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE APRIL 2010 HANOI
INTER-MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON AVIAN AND PANDEMIC
INFLUENZA (IMCAPI)

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¶1. (SBU) Introduction: The Interagency Coordinating Meeting (ICM) on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (API), chaired by Special Representative on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, Ambassador Robert Loftis, met on July 27 to discuss the planned Inter-Ministerial Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IMCAPI) to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam in April 2010. (The ICM consists of representatives from State, USAID, HHS, DHS, DOD, and USDA.) ICM members appreciated documents provided by Embassy Hanoi and the initiative taken by the Embassy Hanoi API team to insure that the U.S. is well positioned to help the Government of Vietnam shape the 2010 conference. IMCAPI can be an effective platform identifying best practices and lessons learned in the face of the H5N1 virus situation and the novel Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic to improve human and animal health globally.

¶2. (SBU) This cable summarizes approaches Embassy Hanoi may use in discussions with the GVN's IMCAPI organizing committee, which we understand will include senior GVN officials and representatives from the GVN's Partnership on Avian and Human Influenza (PAHI). Unfolding events, both in terms of organizing IMCAPI and in the ongoing H1N1 pandemic, will impact planning and may necessitate adjustments to and refocusing of the conference agenda. We look forward to exchanging ideas with the Embassy Hanoi team as we move forward. End Introduction and Summary.

¶3. (SBU) The ICM supports the holding of a technical-level meeting in advance of IMCAPI to address issues that will assist the ministerial meeting in approaching key issues in a holistic and mutually reinforcing manner. No decision was reached on whether a technical meeting should take place immediately prior to IMCAPI or precede the ministerial by some period to provide more time to consider technical issues.

On balance, however, the ICM believes it preferable to hold the technical review meeting on the eve of the IMCAPI to deal with significant and unanticipated changes to the current pandemic situation. Moreover, the ICM notes that many of the experts who would attend the technical review meeting will also be responsible for responding to the Novel H1N1 pandemic.

¶4. (SBU) While the current H1N1 pandemic will be a major subject of the IMCAPI, it must not totally eclipse discussion

of the need for continued vigilance against a more pathogenic influenza strain, including H5N1 avian influenza. (UN System Influenza Coordinator Dr. David Nabarro also emphasized this point in a July 27 telephone conversation with Ambassador Loftis, prior to the ICM meeting.) The ministerial portion of the conference might, therefore, be shaped around three central themes or areas of focus: 1) the status of H5N1 avian influenza planning, key ongoing issues, and response efforts; 2) the impact of, and response to, the novel H1N1, including lessons learned regarding the successes/failures/modifications and the groundwork laid as a result of H5N1 as it has applied to the current pandemic; and 3) using the lessons from H5N1 and the novel H1N1 to develop an integrated approach to dealing with emerging zoonotic diseases.

15. (SBU) Additional points to be considered in planning an agenda

Contributors to previous international meetings on AI/PI should be included in IMCAPI planning discussions at an early stage. Such key partners include representatives of the informal International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI) Core Group countries - Australia, Canada, France, Japan, EU & EC Presidency, UK, with UNSIC, and major international organizations, including (in addition to UNSIC) the WHO, FAO, World Bank, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and others.

- Country Operating Plans: The World Bank and UNSIC have

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highlighted repeatedly the need for countries to fully test their pandemic influenza country operating plans. However, the IMCAPI agenda should avoid being a forum for a long series of "status reports" delivered by Ministers. Rather, IMCAPI organizers may wish to plan an agenda which highlights how generic avian influenza and pandemic influenza (AI/PI) planning was useful in responding to the emergence of novel H1N1, using a handful of countries as case studies. Countries that have been particularly hard hit, such as Argentina, may provide lessons learned for other regions.

- Focus on Emergency Continuity Planning and Economic Impacts: The Government of Mexico could provide a useful presentation on how the H1N1 virus affected their economy and how lessons learned can be applied should another infectious disease with pandemic potential emerge. Other emergency continuity planning efforts in areas such as food security, humanitarian support, infrastructure protection, and economic stabilization would be beneficial to those countries that have not yet fully implemented their country operating plans.

- Assessing New Threats and Response/Planning Strategies: E/SE Asia's approach to the threat of H1N1 in the region where H5N1 remains endemic and the possible merging of the two viruses might be subject for a presentation led by IMCAPI's GVN host in concert with ASEAN partners.

- Communications: Egypt's aggressive communications effort to confront H5N1 in humans which, evidence indicates, has reduced the fatality rate dramatically as compared to H5N1 cases elsewhere. However, these efforts have apparently not decreased the overall number of human cases.

- Regional Approaches: Using the North American Plan (NAP) as an example of a successful framework for discussion, particularly how the NAP facilitated the H1N1 response by the North American partners (U.S., Mexico, Canada);

16. (SBU) Dealing with the Zoonotic Issue - Potential and Reality: The zoonotic issue should receive greater attention than in previous AI/PI ministerial meetings. However, care

must be taken to ensure that the discussion of zoonotics remain focused on several key areas, such as improved surveillance for emerging zoonotics and improving the relationship between those responsible for animal health and those responsible for human health. During the zoonotic portion of the conference, the broader issue of pandemic threats to global food security could be discussed. For example, Argentina's experience with the H1N1 virus entering swine, a potential vessel for virus mutation, could provide useful insight for those countries that rely heavily on the pork industry and that are less familiar with the virus' implications for the swine population. However, such initiatives as the "One World, One Health" concept may carry baggage beyond the purview (not to mention time available) of IMCAPI.

¶7. (SBU) Global Response - Assistance & Benefits: Although recent AI/PI ministerial meetings have not formally been held "pledging" sessions, donors (national governments and international organizations) have generally announced pledges in the context of the ministerial meeting. IMCAPI Vietnam may have an even greater focus on the issue of resource availability to recipient countries than in the past because of the H1N1 pandemic.

¶8. (SBU) The USG would support a technical discussion of the scientific basis and the rationale for vaccination priorities of at risk groups in a variety of countries and settings. It is also important to discuss opportunities for increasing influenza manufacturing capacity including through increasing demand for seasonal vaccinations and technology transfers. Embassy Hanoi should deflect attempts to include & equitable access to vaccines⁸ or similar formulations as part of the agenda. The World Health Assembly has charged the WHO Director General with resolving the remaining issues on the pandemic influenza preparedness framework for the sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits, with a report due to the Executive Board in January 2010.

¶9. (SBU) USG Point of Contact in Washington for the IMCAPI will be Special Representative Loftis and the Office of International Health and Biodefense (OES/IHB). Embassy Hanoi will be the main point of contact with the GVN. We would appreciate Embassy's response to issues discussed in this

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cable. In addition, we would appreciate updates as they become available regarding formation of the GVN organizing committee. Lastly, we would appreciate information regarding any multinational meetings the GVN may wish to convene on IMCAPI organization and support.
CLINTON